

MY GUIDE TO

Introduction

Young people must continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. However, this does not necessarily mean staying in school.

Young people could choose:

- Staying in school
- Further Education - going to a local college
- Training while working (e.g. Supported Internships, Apprenticeships)
- Higher Education - going to university/undergraduate courses from age 18*

Choosing which option is in the best interest for young people is very important and this guide is designed to help you to prepare and support your young person to make that choice.

What are the options available Post 16?

1. Staying at School in 6th Form

- Usually level 2 courses (GCSE-equivalent) and above if mainstream; level 1 and below if specialist
- Typically, 'academic' options – few/no vocational choices
- Courses are usually 2 years

2. Going to College

- Suitable for entry level up to level 3 (A-level equivalent)
- Range of academic and vocational options, including work-based learning and life skills
- Courses are usually 1 to 3 years

See: [Local Offer for list of colleges](#)

3. Apprenticeship

- Suitable for a range of levels - usually level 2 and above, and for those with some work experience
- Can be with a college, business, or training provider
- Work-based and paid, with usually 1 day a week of study

- Usually 1 to 2 years, depending on level

See: [Search apprenticeships – Find an apprenticeship – GOV.UK](#)

4. Traineeship

- Suitable for a range of levels up to level 3, for those with little/no work experience
- Can be a training provider or business
- Work-based and unpaid, with additional support for employability skills
- Usually last between 6 weeks and a year, most commonly 6 months

5. Supported Internship

- Usually entry level 3 to level 2 (can be exceptions) but only for those with EHCP; job coach always provided
- Can be with a college or training provider
- Work-based and unpaid, with usually 1 to 2 days a week of study
- Courses are for 1 year only – must be ready for employment afterwards

See: [Bexley Supported Internships for young people aged 16-24 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan | Bexley Local Offer](#)

* Should a young person aged 18 with an EHCP go to university, their EHCP will cease but the education setting may still provide support and the young person can apply for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

See: <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>

When should I and my young person start to consider Post 16 options?

The formal Preparing for Adulthood process for those with an EHCP starts when a young person is in Year 9 (13 or 14 years old), but the earlier, the better. Young people don't have to make a formal decision about where they want to go until the academic year in which they'll be moving on, but there are a whole range of considerations to think about prior to this, such as preferred way of learning, strengths and interests, travel, and routines and timetables. These are the key stages for choosing post 16 options:

- **Year 9** – start discussions about next steps; this can focus on working out what the young person enjoys, what they're most confident with, what they do not like and their qualities and skills. This does not necessarily include choosing a specific career at

this stage. Think about how future interests can be supported with the choices now and include doing things they actually like doing!

- **Year 10** – start researching possible options; look online at the choices in different settings and from different training providers. Attend open days (usually both virtual and physical options are available) and discuss possible options with careers advisor or SENCO at school.
- **Year 11** – put forward preferences in the autumn term. You can have multiple options, but only one will be named on the EHCP and this should be recorded in a Final Amended copy of the EHCP by **March 31st** in Year 11. This is to make sure that the new setting has time to plan for the support needed for the arrival of each new student.

This deadline of March 31st also applies to any transitions made in subsequent years between different post 16 settings.

If plans change due to unexpected circumstances, your Case Officer will work with you to resolve as soon as possible.

How can I and my young person prepare to choose an option?

1. Start Thinking Early about Next Steps:

- What would they enjoy studying?
- What might they do on their days off?
- How will they travel?
- Where will they live?
- Who will they spend time with at home and socially?
- What are their hopes for how life will look beyond education?

2. Talk about Aspirations - and make sure these are shared before each review. They do not have to be education or work-specific. They are aspirations for adult life as a whole.

3. Think about Outcomes – what would be realistic but progressive goals that help work towards their aspirations?

4. Research your Options – attend open days, look at the Local Offer, look at setting websites, attend local events etc. Put forward preferences a few months before the March 31st deadline.

See: The Bexley Post 16 Directory is available online: [Decisions Post-16 | London Borough of Bexley](#)

What if my young person requires more support outside of education? What about a residential placement?

For children with an EHCP, the Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) team may be part of the Annual Review process from Year 9 onwards. Children and young people who are not already known to other social care services will require a “Needs Assessment”. These are for young people and their carers, where there is a likely need for care and support when the young person reaches age 18 and a PfA assessment would be of ‘significant benefit’.

This assessment (if eligible) will result in the allocation of a PfA Worker/PfA Social Worker who will create a support plan with your young person. This can include supported living arrangements, accessing community activities and direct payments/personal budgets. Please see more information about the PfA team and further links on the Local Offer: [Bexley Local Authority - Preparing for Adulthood Team \(Social Care\) | Bexley Local Offer](#)

Bexley has a vision to source provision and services locally where possible. In some very rare cases it may be assessed that a young person requires a residential placement to access their learning. The SEN Case Officer or another member of the SEN team would lead on these discussions. However, for most cases there are day placements available within Bexley’s post 16 settings that young people can access on a daily basis.

Should families want to access a residential placement, where it has not been assessed as a need historically, the first step would be for them to raise the suggestion of a residential setting with their key worker in either the Health or Social Care team (as well as the SEN Case Officer assigned to the current school). This should be done in good time to allow for any appropriate assessments to be undertaken and advice to be provided by relevant services.

Depending on the reasoning behind the request for a residential placement and also the intended outcome at the end of education, a supported living placement may be appropriate with your young person attending a college/further education establishment.

The decision-making process for these services includes reviews by panels and ultimately by a Tri-partite panel (where Education, Health and Social Care colleagues discuss individual cases and reach a joint decision on whether it is appropriate for your

young person and how this should be funded between the services). The reasons that residential colleges may be appropriate can vary a lot and so not all of the above may apply (e.g. it may be more social care related rather than health or education).

Due to the specialist nature of residential settings, it is important to start the process of researching options and to have those conversations early as well as identify more than one possible setting. This is because your preferred college may not have space, or might not be able to meet specific needs. It is also important to factor in sufficient time to visit settings, attend open days, read brochures, review Ofsted reports etc. It may be advisable to apply to more than one setting at the same time so that if one cannot meet need, you still have other applications in progress.

A useful resource is Natspec. It is the membership association for organisations that offer specialist further education and training for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 16 to 25.

See:

- <https://natspec.org.uk/colleges/applying-for-a-place/>
- <https://natspec.org.uk/colleges/search/>

How will school help us to make a decision?

Schools can support as follows:

- Complete the Annual Review and record all specific recommendations for amending the EHCP in a report for the LA, focusing on preparing for adulthood
- Support with developing preparing for adulthood outcomes
- Plan for transition effectively, including talking to the new setting and developing a transition plan if needed
- Signposting families to information and other services, if needed
- Ensuring that careers education is provided that helps the young person express their views and understand all their possible options

Schools cannot:

- Advise on which setting to attend, although they can advise what course level and study pathway might be more suitable.
- Use access arrangements for exams unless the exam board has agreed to them

- Suggest amendments to an EHCP without evidence, although they can provide their own evidence if it is their area of expertise
- Sort housing, benefits, respite, care placements, health provision, etc

How will our Case Officer help to make a decision?

Case Officers can support as follows:

- Amend the EHCP following an Annual Review, based on the specific recommendations from all parties
- Consult with potential new settings and secure the placement. Please note that further education colleges will require parents or young people to apply to them directly regarding courses they want to undertake and to comply with their enrolment process. The Local Authority will consult with the college on whether the setting can meet the young person's needs primarily, rather than apply for particular courses.
- Help everyone understand the legislation and processes around EHCPs

Case Officers cannot:

- Advise on which setting to attend
- Apply to a FE college setting course, this would be the young person/family in conjunction with the college setting
- Enforce access arrangements for exams
- Make amendments to an EHCP without evidence, or make decisions about funding or significant changes to provision
- Sort housing, respite, benefits, care placements, health provision, etc

Please see the following page on the Local Offer which provides more detail about the Case Officers' role and responsibilities: [The role of a SEN Case Officer | Bexley Local Offer](#). This also has a link to contact details for the team.

How are placements decided?

The following key factors are considered when deciding on a placement:

1. The Young Person's Views:

- Aspirations and goals
- Preferred style of learning
- Values and likes

2. Appropriateness for SEND

- Support already in place or that can be made available
- Whether the setting is able to meet needs without preventing education of others

3. Appropriateness for Level of Ability

- Setting and course allows study at right level and learning format
- Chosen course represents progression – it is not normally expected that a young person would be permitted to repeat the same level of study.

4. Effective use of Resources

- Closest settings will be considered that can meet needs and offer right course
- Legal right to mainstream; other options considered where needed

What support is available to young people Post 16?

- Colleges and universities have a legal duty to try to remove the barriers in education due to disability. This is called ‘making reasonable adjustments’. These adjustments help make sure disabled people get the same access to education as anyone else.
- Colleges and training providers must also make reasonable adjustments for disabled apprentices and trainees

See: <https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/reasonable-adjustments-college-university>

- EHCPs can remain in place for the young person up to the age of 25 if they remain in education and/or training and they continue to need additional support. This is the case unless the young person goes to university, in which case the EHCP ceases (see page 2 above).

Sources of Further Information

- [Bexley Local Offer / Services | Bexley Local Offer](#) (PFA area of Local offer)
- **Prospects/Bexley Youth Advice** - [Bexley Youth Advice \(BYA\) Service - Careers Advice for young people with SEND | Bexley Local Offer](#)
- **Advocacy for All** - [Home - Advocacy for All](#)
- **Preparing for Adulthood team (social care)** - [Bexley Local Authority - Preparing for Adulthood Team \(Social Care\) | Bexley Local Offer](#)
- **GP/Health Services** - [Health services for adults and young people in Bexley | Bexley Local Offer](#)
- **Adult Learning Disability Team** - [NHS Oxleas - Bexley Community Adult Learning Disability Team | Bexley Local Offer](#)
- **Bexley Mind** - [HOME - Mind in Bexley](#)
- **Bexley IASS** - [Bexley SEND Information Advice and Support Service | Bexley IASS](#)
- **Preparing for Adulthood.org.uk** [Preparing for Adulthood: All Tools & Resources - NDTi](#)
- **Sense** – [SEND in post-16 education or training](#)
- **Contact** – [Extra help in education for 19-25 year olds](#)
- **Transport** – [SEND Travel Assistance to school/college- Bexley Local Offer](#)

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